

Office of Elementary and Secondary Education Webcast

“Title I Key Fiscal Issues: Introduction”

October 13, 2004

Susan Wilhelm

Group Leader, Policy Coordination Team, Title I Program Office

Kay Rigling

U.S. Department of Education, Title I Program Attorney

Sandy Brown

Program Analyst and Allocations Specialist, Policy Coordination Team, Title I Program Office

Kim O’Neal

Program Analyst, Monitoring and Audits Group, Title I Program Office

Susan Wilhelm, Moderator, U.S. Department of Education, Title I Program Office:

Hello, my name is Susan Wilhelm, and I am the Group Leader for the Policy Coordination Team in the Title I Program Office. Our webcast today is going to focus on Title I fiscal issues. Specifically, we are going to talk about maintenance of effort, comparability, supplement not supplant, and carryover and reallocation.

We picked these topics because they’re topics that we get a lot of questions about. We also picked them because they’re very important provisions in Title I that are designed so that Title I funds are used at the local level to improve teaching and learning.

We have three experts from the department today to talk about these issues with us, and I’d like to introduce them at this point. Our first panelist is Kay Rigling. Kay is the Title I Program Attorney, and works in our office in General Counsel.

The second panelist is Sandy Brown. Sandy is our allocations guru, and he handles all the policy issues related to fiscal issues in Title I.

And our third panelist is Kim O’Neal. Kim is a program analyst in the Monitoring and

Audit Group. Her responsibility is to look at fiscal management and private school administration in local school districts and in states as part of our monitoring effort. She also works with resolving audits here in our Washington D.C. office.

Before we get into the details of these specific provisions and how they operate, I'd like to take a moment to talk about why they are important.

Sandy, could you give us some background information about what these provisions are intended to do?

Sandy BROWN, Title I Program Office:

Sure. A couple things to keep in mind. First off, Title I, and federal funds generally, are targeted at specific at-risk student groups. The other thing to keep in mind is that education in this country is primarily a state and local function.

And the purpose of the federal program is to essentially supplement, or add on to, that which the state and local should already be providing to their children in the education area.

So, that's why these fiscal requirements were put in place – to make sure that the federal investment actually was, in fact, an investment – that it was something, done on top of what state and localities should be doing to begin with, and that these funds are designed to enhance what the state and locals are already doing.

Susan WILHELM:

If my history is right, I think these provisions were actually added to the statute in 1968 or 1969, specifically to ensure that the resources were, in fact, supplemental – because there had been some questions about how funds were being used.

Sandy BROWN:

That's correct. At first, Title I was looked upon almost like an impact aid program for school districts that had high numbers of poor kids, and it was basically just added to the general fund to try and increase the opportunities for all kids. But the problem was, that districts were not really targeting the funds from the federal sources on kids who really needed the services.

Susan WILHELM:

That's right. And Kim, could you talk for a moment for why we monitor in these areas?

Kim O'NEAL, Program Analyst, Monitoring and Audit Group, Title I Program Office:

As a federal monitor, it is my job to ensure that our funds, Title I allocations, are being used in schools with the greatest need, and the areas that we are covering today, are directly related to the funds that we are giving to states and districts to provide services for the educationally disadvantaged children.

Susan WILHELM:

I think that's a really important connection between the two things that you both talked about. It's not just that the funds are supplemental, but that they're used to help at risk kids achieve to high levels so that can achieve to the same high levels of all students.